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TAGS: PREL PGOV MOPS KMCA RW  
SUBJECT: NEXT STEPS FOR THE RWANDA-DRC PARTNERSHIP

Classified By: Ambassador W. Stuart Symington for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

¶1. (S) In a July 24 conversation with DCM (then Charge), National Security Service (NSS) Director General Emmanuel Ndahiro said he expected Presidents Kagame and Kabilo to meet some time before the UNGA sessions in New York in September. He did not have a specific date, but added that the possibility of other joint operations would be a natural topic for such a meeting. He said such a discussion would hinge on the results of Kabilo's broad-ranging review of FARDC operations in the North and Sound Kivu, which he said would be held at the end of July. "At that point," Ndahiro added, "the Congolese might approach the GOR for a discussion of possible future operations." Ndahiro explained that he considered the first Rwandan-DRC joint operation, Umoja Wetu, to be a limited security success, while noting its diplomatic importance and the considerably improved relations between the two nations. He also confirmed that arrangements for the exchange of Ambassadors between the two countries was proceeding apace. (Note: The GOR has reportedly approved the DRC's Ambassador designate. End Note.)

¶2. (S) In an earlier discussion with pol/econ counselor, NSS External Affairs Chief Joseph Nzabamwita said that the "question" of new joint military operations had not yet been "tabled for discussion" by the two governments. He described the DRC's message to the government of Rwanda (GOR) as the following: "Let us employ our forces," and if the situation "gets out of hand," then "we'll get back to you." According to Nzabamwita, the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) have been active operationally, and have had some successes and some reverses. They had not "massively abandoned the field," nor engaged in any new "joining of forces" with the FDLR (as often accused of in the past by the GOR). On that basis, Nzabamwita said the GOR was content to observe FARDC operations, while keeping a close watch on the evolving situation.

¶3. (S) Comment. The recent dramatic increase in Rwandan-DRC cooperation is no overnight success: it is the result of the two parties' recognition of their shared fundamental interests and reflects sustained encouragement and effort by the U.S. and others to bring them together. The key challenge now is to nurture this partnership and extend it from the diplomatic and security arenas to economic development benefitting both countries. We expect that Kagame-Kabilo discussions will touch on all these elements. End Comment.

SYMINGTON